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Vol.02

Bozhou Dough

The Pinched Tang Figures · A Reader

A free reader about a 2,000-year-old fingertip craft

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A free cultural reader by shejipin.com. A decorative craft — not food, not medicine.

EDITOR'S NOTE

From scent to dough: another thread of Bozhou

Last issue we followed the scent of 33°N into Bozhou's herb sachets. This time, we stay in the same small city — and watch a ball of dough turn into a Tang-dynasty lady.

Bozhou's craft is not one thing. Thread by thread, it gathers into a quiet cluster of four: **herbs** (sewn into sachets), **red clay** (shaped into figures), **dough** (pinched into little ladies), and **pit carving** (a pavilion cut from a walnut). We call this issue the "dough" thread — not to sell, but to share how a handful of flour becomes something worth keeping.

If you collect slow, handmade things, leave us your email. The fourth thread of Bozhou is already here — **Vol.03 · Bozhou Pit Carving**, a pavilion cut from a single walnut. [Read Vol.03 →](#) (After Bozhou, we'll finally walk into a Jingdezhen kiln opening as Vol.04.)

Preview note: the dough-figurine product photo in this issue is original photography; process illustrations are AI-generated previews and will be replaced with original step-by-step photography in the final edition.

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01 From herbs to dough: Bozhou's craft cluster

One city, three quiet threads of handcraft

Walk through Bozhou and you keep meeting the same idea in different materials. The herb market that fills sachets with scent; the red-clay studios that fire little figures; the dough benches where a pinch becomes a face; the carving table where a blade hollows a walnut into a pavilion. None of these is "invented" — they grew side by side, passed hand to hand for generations.

We like dough figurines because they sit at the gentle end of the cluster: no kiln, no fire, just **flour, pigment, and fingertips**. The fourth thread — pit carving — now joins the cluster in [Vol.03](#). (Note: Bozhou's latitude and terroir are the geographic and cultural background of these crafts — they are not any efficacy or food-safety claim. A dough figure is a decorative object, full stop.)



A Bozhou dough figurine — Tang-dynasty lady under a glass dome

When we say "the dough of Bozhou", we mean a **traceable, handmade reassurance** — you know whose bench it came from, not a mass-produced trinket.

02 Dough, not clay: what makes it special

Same "figure", two completely different materials

A dough figurine looks like clay at a glance — but the material could not be more different.

Dough (mian su) starts from wheat flour and a little binder, colored with **food-grade pigments**; it is soft, pliable, and shaped entirely by hand, often in minutes. **Clay figures** start from earth and need drying or firing.

That flour base is exactly why dough figurines carry one hard rule we repeat on every product card:

⚠ Compliance note: dough figurines are **decorative, not edible** (非食品). They are a craft object, never food. We use food-grade pigments for safety, but the finished piece is **not for consumption**. Figures with small parts are **not suitable for children under 3** (choking risk). Keep away from mouth.



Pinching the form by hand — flour, pigment, fingertips (process illustration · preview)

Because the base is flour, dough figurines are also delicate: they dislike moisture and pressure, which is why most collectible pieces live under a glass dome (see 04).

03 The making: pinch, shape, dot the eye

Slow is the most expensive cost of this little figure

①

Knead

②

Pinch & shape

③

Dot the eye

No mold, no machine — only hands. From a kneaded ball to a finished lady takes an artisan **tens of minutes**: the steady press of a thumb, the roll of a tiny arm, the single dot of a brush that "opens" the face. The quiet of the bench is the part machines can never copy.



Dotting the eye — the moment the figure "wakes up" (process illustration · preview)

That is why we film the whole process: what you keep is not just a figure, but a piece of handcraft time you can see and trust.

04 Inside a glass dome: why we keep it

A small object that asks to be looked at slowly

A dough figurine is fragile — flour softens with humidity and cracks under pressure. So the pieces we love most live **under a glass dome on a cork base**: a tiny stage that shields the figure while it sits on your desk, shelf, or gift table.

That is the quiet appeal of collecting them. They are not "useful" in the modern sense; they are **small, human, and meant to be noticed** — a Tang lady who has traveled two thousand years to sit by your lamp.

Material

Wheat dough + food-grade pigment, cured

Size

≈ 6–12 cm · fits in the palm

Includes

Figure + glass dome + cork base + gift box

Edition

Handmade, made to order



Kept under glass — a desk companion and a gift

⚠ Care note: the glass dome is protective packaging, not a guarantee. Handle gently, avoid drops and long humidity, and keep away from direct heat. We never claim a dough figure is "unbreakable".

05 Artisan profile

___ · a Bozhou-based dough-figurine artisan



At the dough bench in Bozhou (process illustration · preview)

___ learned the pinch from an elder in Bozhou and has kept a small workbench of their own ever since — decades gone by, one figure at a time.

"A ball of dough has no face until your hand gives it one." — a Bozhou artisan's saying

(Above is template placeholder copy — replace with the real artisan's name, background, and an authorized quote before publishing.)

06 Next issue · Bozhou Pit Carving (out now)

The fourth thread of the same city — already published

The fourth thread of Bozhou is already here: **Vol.03 · Bozhou Pit Carving** — a pavilion cut from a single walnut, smaller than your thumbnail. [Read Vol.03 →](#) After Bozhou, we'll finally walk into a Jingdezhen kiln opening as **Vol.04**.



Vol.03 · Bozhou pit carving — read it here →

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